

## Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for April 3, 2019

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Steve Flanders, Peter Griggs, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Craig Layne, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Liz Russell, Brie Swenson

The committee plans to have an engineer, Chris Temple of DeWolf Engineering in Montpelier, examine the site for a construction of a new bridge to replace that which collapsed on Brown School House Road where it crosses Charles Brown Brook.

Mr. Temple is highly experienced in numerous aspects of bridge engineering and permitting. His assessment of the site and bridge proposals would cost no more than \$140. An engineering perspective is considered essential before moving ahead with other aspects of bridge replacement. State approval for a new bridge will also be needed before any construction starts.

It is anticipated that at an April 24 meeting the Selectboard will discuss this bridge replacement over Charles Brown Brook and possibly also a requested expansion of the Gile Mountain Trail parking lot. Members of the Trails Committee may wish to be present for those discussions.

A preliminary proposal concerning side trails in the Appalachian Trail Corridor (ATC) was drafted by Steve Flanders with assistance from several members of an ad hoc subcommittee and submitted to the US Forest Service where it was favorably received. To complete this proposal, approvals for connecting trails outside the Corridor are needed from several landowners. The process of obtaining these approvals is now underway. Later this spring, at an yet undesignated date, several members of the Trails Committee, regulatory representatives from the Forest Service and possibly other organizations concerned with the ATC, and possibly officials from the Town of Norwich are to hold a field trip to view trails discussed in the proposal as an additional step in determining which side trails within the Corridor are eventually to be authorized.

Craig Layne led a discussion about trail-related topics to be covered at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission, with members of the Trails Committee attending, in Tracy Hall at 7 PM on Tuesday April 16. A general theme concerns how public enthusiasm for an expanded trail network in Norwich can be made compatible with safeguards for environmentally sensitive areas in the town. To this end, potentially productive approaches include 1) map overlays comparing proposed trail routes with areas needing protection and 2) a protocol for development of proposed new trails.

Craig Layne also spoke about public pathways in Norwich as an outgrowth of discussions arising from Article 38 on the March ballot. Emphasis in discussions so far has been about pathways which might be established in or near Norwich village and which might include bike lanes. If such pathways can be established, deeds or easements would be sought to assure long term viability. Among others participating in discussions of pathways planning are Steve Flanders and Brie Swenson. Additional members of the Trails Committee would be very much welcome to join in these discussions of planning for pathways.

Gerry Plummer and Nick Krembs are to prepare a grant proposal due May 1 for funds to support planning for restoration of the Brown School House Road bridge across Charles Brown Brook.

Trail work sessions of the committee are scheduled for Saturday May 11 (to work on blowdowns and clean up on the Connector Trail), on Sunday May 19, and on Sunday June 16. More details about these work days are to be provided in later communications.

Respectfully submitted,  
George Clark